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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8681

RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 3936

INFO RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE

RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 001456

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (DECL DATE)

NOFORN

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CAIRO FOR A/S FRAZER

DEPT FOR AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02 APRIL 2017

TAGS: PTER ASEC MOPS PGOV PREL EAID SO ET UG

SUBJECT: Somali Security Chief on Fighting

Classified by Poloff John O'Leary. Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Ref: A) Nairobi 1440 B) Nairobi 1173

¶1. (C) In the context of a meeting at the Embassy on April 1 with DS agents regarding future VIP travel to Somalia, Transitional Federal Government (TFG) security chief Mohamed Warsame Farah (AKA Darawish) discussed the current fighting in Mogadishu with Poloff. He stated that he had been in Yemen and Ethiopia during the fighting but was in continual contact with TFG Mogadishu and was thus up to date on events. He also noted that he was "always at the President's [Abdullahi Yusuf's] side".

¶2. (C) According to Farah, TFG and Ethiopian forces engaged approximately 600 "insurgents" in the fighting that began on Thursday (3/29). As of Sunday evening (4/1), he estimated that 250 to 300 remained. He believed that resistance would collapse by today (4/2) because the fighters were hungry, thirsty, and low on munitions. He rejected the idea of a truce between the Hawiye clan and the Ethiopian forces on the grounds that the fight was with terrorist insurgents--not the Hawiye. He stated that the remnants of al-Shabaab fighters in Mogadishu had fled or were dead, captured, or about to be dead or captured. He said that Shabaab leader Ayro had taken refuge in the home of Hawiye leader Mohamud Uluso and that the home was surrounded by government forces.

¶3. (C) According to Farah, most Hawiye support the TFG and reject extremists. He did not believe that this weekend's fighting would have any negative effect on the upcoming reconciliation conference because Somalis were tired of war and favored destruction of the extremists.

¶4. (C/NF) According to Farah, remnants of the Islamic Courts are preparing to regroup and launch a "movement" with the support of Eritrea, Djibouti, and Doha; but they have no credibility with the Somali people. He forcefully stated that insurgents would not return to Mogadishu.

¶5. (SBU) Concerning aid for the areas devastated by the fighting, Farah stated that the TFG did not have resources to launch a relief effort and that assistance would have to come from the international community. For now, he continued, residents who fled Mogadishu were trying to make contact with relatives outside the city for support; in the city, businessmen might be providing some assistance to local residents.

¶6. (C/NF) Comment. Farah made no distinction between TFG forces and Ethiopian forces in regard to this weekend's fighting, declining to note that TFG forces took little part in the battle. Embassy contacts in Mogadishu, including Hawiye, are unanimous in their view that the Hawiye perceive the fighting as a battle between the TFG and their clan, not against terrorist "insurgents". Most Nairobi-based observers believe that it will be difficult to hold a meaningful reconciliation conference in the near term, given the Hawiye perception. End comment.

Ranneberger